

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the Amendments and Remarks as set forth hereinbelow.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claims 2-8 as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Although not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, claim 2 has been cancelled and the subject matter has been added to claim 1. Claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 are now in condition for allowance.

CLAIM FOR PRIORITY

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner has recognized the Applicant's claim for foreign priority. In view of the fact that the Applicant's claim for foreign priority has been perfected, no additional action is required from the Applicants at this time.

DRAWINGS

Attached hereto are Replacement Sheets for Figs. 1 and 7 wherein the lead line for numeral 36 has been corrected. In addition, the Examiner has not approved the Formal Drawings submitted by the Applicants. It is respectfully submitted that the drawings comply

with the requirements of the USPTO. If the Examiner has any objections to the Formal Drawings he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned as soon as possible so that appropriate action may be taken. No further action is believed to be necessary at this time unless the undersigned receives a notice from the Examiner.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The Examiner has acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statement filed on October 23, 2003. An initialed copy of the PTO-1449 has been received from the Examiner. No further action is necessary at this time.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 112

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 USC 112 as being indefinite. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, claim 1 has been amended to correct the reference to “these components” and to provide antecedent basis for “a final decelerator.” Claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 now comply with the provisions of 35 USC 112.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 102

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Sumiyoshi et al, US 4,938,306. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, claims 2, 4, 6 and 8 have been cancelled. The subject matter of claim 2 has been added to claim 1 to place claims 1, 3, 5, and 7 in condition for allowance. It is respectfully submitted that the prior art cited by the Examiner does not set forth combination of elements as set forth in claims 1, 3, 5 and 7. Thus, the Examiner's rejection based on 35 USC 102 has been obviated.

NO PROSECUTION HISTORY ESTOPPEL

Claim 2 has been presented in independent form by canceling claim 2 and adding the subject matter to claim 1. No prosecution history estoppel would apply to the interpretation of the limitations set forth in claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 in view of the fact that this subject matter has been continuously presented since the original filing date of the present application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner, either alone or in combination.

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but to merely show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims are respectfully requested.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

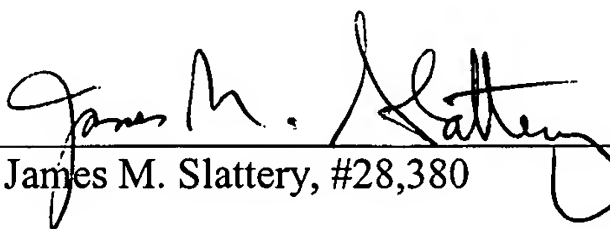
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

A prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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JMS/mmi
0505-1256P

Attachment(s)

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Figures 1 and 7 have been amended to correct the lead line for numeral 36.